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ABSTRACT

This projection of trends in language instruction in the State of New York features a reoriented audiolingual teaching methodology stressing the significance of programed self-instruction with modified educational objectives and goals. Prominent in the discussion are concepts relating to: (1) the teacher as manager of instruction, (2) improvement in the techniques used in instruction, (3) "transfer" versus "drill" activities, (4) flexible curriculums and modular scheduling, (5) the student-centered curriculum, and (6) the development of self-instructional programs. The views represented in this paper are largely derived from papers given at the third Advisory Panel meeting sponsored by the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education of the State Education Department of New York. (RL)

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TO: Teachers of Foreign Languages, Guidance Counselors, and Administrators

SUBJECT: Foreign Language Instruction in New York State for the 1970's: Techniques, Materials, Equipment

Reports dated April 30 and June 15 recorded the recommendations of two Advisory Panels considering future directions of certain aspects of foreign language instruction in New York State. The third and last Advisory Panel in the series conducted its discussions under the auspices of the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education in the Education Building on February 27 and 28, 1970. The panelists were Mrs. Patricia A. Johansen of the Center for Applied Linguistics, and Professors Theodore Mueller of the University of Kentucky, M. Keith Myers of the University of Illinois, and Albert Valdman of Indiana University. Also present at the discussions were the members of the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education. Paul M. Glaude, Chief of that Bureau, was chairman of the panel.

Each panelist produced one or more papers in relation to the topic. The paper written by Professor Valdman, entitled "Toward a Better Implementation of the Audio-Lingual Approach", appeared in The Modern Language Journal, Vol. LIV, No. 5 (May, 1970), pp. 309-319, and that written by Professor Myers, entitled "Platonic Pubescence: The Instructional Computer Comes of Age", was published in the NALLD Journal, Vol. IV, No. 4 (May, 1970), pp. 57-62. "Foreign Language Instruction: Why? What? and Who? (and a little less How?)", by Mrs. Johansen, and "Programmed Instruction—A Power Tool for the Language Instructor", by Professor Mueller, will be published by the Department for use by groups of teachers discussing this third panel report. Additional papers on "PLATO" (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), written by Professor Myers and associates, are obtainable directly from Professor Myers at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

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The '70's

Foreign language instruction in the 1970's should be characterized by a new context of learning, improved teaching-and-learning techniques, a greater flexibility of curricula, sensible strides toward self-instruction and individualized learning, and the employment of better materials and equipment.

The New Context

The new context of learning should be one in which the teacher becomes a "manager" of instruction, rather than as at present an "orchestrator" or "drillmaster". Although details are to be worked out at all levels, the new context could involve modular scheduling, conversion of a proportion of available classrooms into foreign language laboratories, increased flexibility of other classroom components (as to size, seating plan, furniture, etc.), loose and informal classroom organization (much in the manner of the McCluer experiment[1]), increased student freedom, self-direction and responsibility (though with constant teacher verification of progress), team teaching, increased diagnostic and remedial competence of teachers, and variable horizontal and vertical progress of students according to their interests and aptitudes. It could mean adding new teaching agents (unlicensed teacher aides to do all the housekeeping, superior students to help the less able) and the greater use of available native speakers as resource persons to heighten the realism of foreign language learning. Despite inadequacies, the McCluer program did transform the teachers into managers of instruction and did show what teachers can do when they want change.

Instructional Techniques

The panelists were in general agreement as to the need for improved instructional techniques and identified the chief deficiencies of common audio-lingual practice as follows: premature stress on speaking, over-reliance on dialogue-memorization and on pattern-drill, teaching grammar out of relation with meaning, insufficient recourse to all useful sense-modalities, and too rigid an order of learning.

It was considered that adoption of Professor John B. Carroll's views concerning a correction of the audio-lingual habit theory by due application of elements of the cognitive code-learning theory[2] would provide a better base for foreign language study. More specifically, recommendation was made

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[1]Fred H. Wood, "The McCluer Plan: An Innovative Non-Graded Foreign Language Program", MLJ, Vol. LIV, No. 3 (March, 1970), pp. 184-187.

[2]John B. Carroll, "The Contributions of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages", in Albert Valdman, editor, Trends In Language Teaching, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 93-106.

the student has been trained to recognize it through presentation and explanation. The sequence and time-distribution of activities for developing control of a grammatical pattern might be: 20% presentation, 10% actual explanation, 5% drilling, and 65% transfer activities (i.e., discrimination tasks and applications to realistic situations in basic skill areas).

Students need varying amounts of pattern practice: gifted students need few or sometimes no repetitions; average students profit from drill on some patterns; and the non-gifted may need to do all of the pattern drills provided. For many grammatical patterns, some students do not need manipulative drills, but for contrastive combinations (e.g., pronoun sets) the problem of learning may be best solved by manipulation.

Even for the less apt students, the helpfulness of drill is uncertain. It may be that the general pace is too fast for some, and that they need less drill than dwell—i.e., they need an intelligent vehicle for dwelling on certain foreign language aspects. The vehicle may be a piece of paper to look at or write on, even when learning to listen or to speak. Many beginning students need to see at some time, perhaps initially, what they are learning to receive aurally and to transmit orally. They can thus capitalize on all their sense modalities as these are relevant and effective in respect to the learning task. Further, not only is it possible to develop conversational skills from a reading base; with some students, it may be the most practical and efficient means.

Flexible Curricula

We should not force the audio-lingual—or the transmissive as opposed to the receptive—skills on students who are neither interested nor apt. Instead, we should make alternate paths available to students, both in objectives and in accompanying modes of study. Teachers should have the option of identifying students' areas of probable maximum strength (e.g., reading) and making suitable recommendations for skill development. Students themselves ought to have the option of selecting the direction in which they choose to go. We should then follow aptitude profiles and tailor objectives to students. These would be a necessary part of the individualization of instruction. Of course, admission that the advanced development of all four "basic" skills is not essential to success does not mean neglecting the development of some degree of skill in the four areas by the end of Level III.

In connection with the above, full use should be made of such predictive tools as the MLAT (Modern Language Aptitude Test)[4] and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery.[5] Each of these instruments has sections supposedly

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[4]John B. Carroll & Stanley M. Sapon; rev. ed.; New York: Psychological Corporation, 1959.

[5]Paul Pimsleur; New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966.

for the adoption of the corrective measures which are enumerated and discussed below.

In the beginning phases of instruction, there should be far more training in listening comprehension than in speaking. In fact, within the entire communication sphere, precedence might well be accorded the receptive skills over the transmissive skills. A gradual increase in speaking and writing would come as students progress in auditory comprehension and reading.

Of the transmissive or language-producing skills, it is desirable to emphasize speaking over writing. At early levels of foreign language study, writing is for the students primarily a tool for learning. However, it should be possible to expect students to write connected discourse of paragraph-length by the end of Level III in terms of New York State syllabi. Performance in writing can also be considered a reflection of speaking proficiency. It must be added that the Regents examinations of 1969 represent a good balance in relative values (and, therefore, degrees) assigned to the development of skills upon completion of three "levels" of study.

Since students often lack appropriate learning habits or techniques, it is vital for teachers to show students the most effective techniques for learning exactly what the teachers want them to learn. Teachers may expect to spend three or four weeks in training inefficient learners to perform the necessary self-instructional activities which can be expected to vary with the program and the presentation device.

The memorization of dialogues is excessively time-consuming and is not truly compatible with audio-lingual objectives because it fails to develop transferable skills. In the same way, repetition or substitution drills for learning grammatical patterns do not produce speaking proficiency that can be transferred to the context of real conversation. In particular, it is a false assumption that grammatical patterns can be learned in the absence of meaning; in fact, most types of pattern drill soon drive out meaning by repetition.

Some pronunciation drill is necessary, especially with difficult sound combinations. However, what the students do not get in the typical audio-lingual classroom is TRANSFER. They spend most of their time in premature memorizing and drilling, with little or no time left for the most important activities—those of TRANSFER[3]. It is more effective to drill a pattern after

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[3]An example taken from Professor Mueller's paper is given in French as follows: After explanations and basic exercises on sentence patterns in which the noun phrase is introduced by du, de la, etc., the patterns are contrasted in realistic situations in which the stylized remarks of Student A are to be countered by the semi-spontaneous remarks of Student B.

A. Vous en avez reçu? B. (Reçu quoi?)
A. Reçu du vin. B. (Non, je n'ai pas reçu de vin.)

Some of the exercises in commonly available audio-lingual materials could readily be transformed into the kind of exercise illustrated above.

representing different skills so that it may be possible to use performance on the pertinent sections, along with other data including overtly expressed personal preferences, to guide choices in the possible path or paths of study. Some schools may derive advantage from experimenting with the use of both tests, paying particular attention to correlation between test scores on the one hand and classroom performance plus other criteria on the other.

Of course, the concept of "zero-reject" when understood as universal success by all and sundry does not now seem applicable to foreign language study, for present data show that some people are simply unable to learn certain foreign language skills to an acceptable degree of proficiency. However, the numbers of "rejects" in foreign language study in New York State might be reduced almost to the vanishing point by the skilled use of aptitude tests, tailoring flexible curricula to suit the findings of the tests and the wishes of the students involved, and developing State examinations of various kinds to measure outcomes of the new curricula. Skilled use of predictive instruments and other criteria of guidance to foreign language study would be perfectly compatible with the understanding of "zero-reject" as an attitude or technique whereby student interests and motivations are tempered by information on the students' possibilities and probabilities.

In reoriented audio-lingualism with modified goals (e.g., increased stress on auditory comprehension and deferred stress on speech-production) the use of dialogues for listening-comprehension training could improve student attitudes tremendously and would permit more effective pedagogical approaches which are far less time-consuming and eventually far more productive. One does not have to teach all units of the foreign language before some comprehension is possible, but just that part of the system relevant to the task at hand.

In developing listening-comprehension skill, one should first condition students to identify the relevant cues contained in a passage. An often neglected exercise nowadays is that of having students write something down. It is very counter-intuitive not to permit students to take written notes when they feel that doing so will somehow help them to develop the skill in question. The point is to have the students listen, reorganize specific linguistic features, and interpret them.

This goal and approach would require teaching grammar for listening comprehension: identifying the symbols contained in a given stretch of speech, relating noises to words and grammatical features as necessary, but without formal grammatical discussion. The students would be trained to understand without constantly focussing on individual words, and would instead be obliged to center their attention on word-groups. Such instruction would counter one of the basic problems facing the students: they are word-oriented in the foreign language, but the foreign language is word-group oriented. We should therefore oblige students to change their attitude in this important respect and should make them listen to spoken language in word-groups. We should make them read in a similar manner.

Self-Instruction

Attempts to break the "lockstep" of teaching and learning received considerable attention during the 1960's[6] and avowedly underlay many of the claims made in promotion of the language laboratory. Continued attempts bid fair to become a major preoccupation of the 1970's. It is in this light that we must consider self-instruction ("S-I") in some form as "the coming thing".

Self-instruction and individualized instruction are not the same thing though they may be related. Individualized instruction is considered to mean the tailoring of each course to each individual student, and does not seem immediately feasible in an absolute sense. Some self-instructional materials are not "programmed" and some "programmed" materials are not self-instructional. However, to have effective self-instruction, one generally needs programmed materials. For purposes of this discussion, then, S-I is "programmed".

The panelists accept Professor John B. Carroll's definition of programmed self-instruction as a sequence of learning events which so condition the student that he is likely to succeed from one learning step to the next. It is uncertain whether S-I produces the best ultimate foreign language proficiency, but it is certain that S-I stimulates the production of more closely reasoned materials, that it permits individual self-pacing, that it naturally contributes to some individualization of instruction, that it reduces student-time required for learning given sets of items, that it is primarily student-centered, that it promotes retention of students in foreign language courses, that it can provide effective instruction for students of high motivation and moderate-to-high aptitude, and that it reduces the teacher-to-student ratio for such students. S-I may thus contribute to helping students of lower aptitude both by providing flexible pacing and by increasing teacher-availability for those who need special attention, and it may be a factor in raising the overall rate of progression.

When, for economic or other reasons (as in the case of the less commonly taught languages), no teacher is available, "total" S-I may be necessary. It appears that this mode can permit an able and highly-motivated student to develop an elementary speaking proficiency and a relatively more advanced degree of proficiency in the other skills, depending on the materials. However, it is undoubtedly advisable for a school system or a teacher to start the use of S-I on a partial rather than a total basis, and this mode will most likely be the predominant S-I mode of the next decade.

In any form of self-instruction, the student is the chief component. He is not a passive object, merely exposed to instruction. He is an active element—the most active and the most important. Although the teacher must accept managerial responsibility (which includes responsibility for the selection of effective materials and technological aids), the student for

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[6]Albert Valdman, "How Do We Break the Lockstep?", Audio Visual Instruction, Vol. 7, No. 9 (November 1962), pp. 630-634.

his part must know that he has to do the job himself, that he will not get a passing grade for merely being present while the teacher "dishes out" the lesson. As for the mediocre student, we may rehabilitate him by placing S-I responsibility on his shoulders.

With adoption of the self-instructional mode, the teacher exchanges the role of drill master for that of manager. In managing, the teacher performs a much more important function than drilling. The latter is best left to the program, which makes the presentation and gives some practice in performance, to be complemented by face-to-face conversational activities under teacher management. The teacher's function becomes one which no machine or program can ever perform: that of diagnostician, a prescriber of remedies, and MORE—a conditioner of attitudes, a motivator, a facilitator of realistic performance situations in the classroom.

The teacher must be privy to the order and contingencies of the self-instructional program, have faith in it, and keep his own "expounding" to a minimum, limiting it to students who require special or additional help. This means that the program materials must include a very extensive teacher's guide, with full explanation of rationale and the sequencing of elements. In fact, just as every foreign language teacher trainee should complete a total self-instructional course in a foreign language as part of pre-service training, so should the teacher now in service who is to become a a manager of foreign language instruction in a context which uses self-instructional materials first complete a "total S-I" course, preferably in a language he does not already know. Forward-looking school systems would do well to provide the opportunity for every teacher considerably below retirement age to have this experience as soon as possible.

Pre-conditions of aptitude and related characteristics (motivation, work habits, etc.) may well be set for enrollment in the S-I course. It is then possible to say to the enrolled student: "If you complete my program, take all tests, and do all the remediation required on the basis of the tests, I'll give you no less than a 'B'". The student is thus guaranteed a specific amount of learning and an academic reward if he follows the teacher's directions and works diligently. In the course, he does not advance until his control of the materials is 90%-100% accurate. Having advanced a certain distance on a 90%-100% learning basis, he then has a commensurate degree of control of the foreign language in terms of specific aspects of specific skills. It should be possible for a teacher or a school system to standarize an agreement as to the quantitative and qualitative reward which is to be given for work accomplished. In fact, many students might end up at about the same place in one academic year; "pacing" comes in the amount of time and special supervision or attention required by each student. Assuming approximately equal quality of achievement, the difference in rate of progress between students of average motivation-aptitude and students of below-average motivation-aptitude tends to range around 20%.

The program may utilize weekly tests, unit tests, end-of-sequence tests, and an end-of-the-course test. However, bite-sized testing as the student goes along is not an adequate or acceptable indication of overall success in

the course. Going from one frame to the next can never require summary knowledge of all preceding frames. Besides, even S-I has or may have a multiplicity of components (outside tests, integrated materials for reading, etc.). Thus, the requisites for frame-to-frame progression in S-I cannot replace achievement or proficiency tests.

The design for programmed learning has in mind an optimal order of presentation. Yet while some sequences may be more effective than others, there are innumerable ways of arriving at goals and there is no one ordering of grammatical structures (for example) that is better than all others. In any case, the key to programmed self-instruction is "control". The program presupposes an analysis of the subject matter which brings about a pedagogically determined sequencing of events. There must therefore be some sort of control of the ordering of events,—what happens to the student in terms of the initial stimulus as well as what happens on the basis of his response to that stimulus.

There is no doubt that specifying objectives and terminal behavior in exact detail is a very difficult task. Nevertheless, in evaluating any programmed text, the teacher ought to be able to verify implementation of the author's intentions and claims. The author has to specify the structures and the vocabulary which the student will control in terms of each skill upon satisfactory completion of the program. It is precisely in the degree of control responsibility assumed by the author that we see the difference between standard texts and really programmed materials. The writer of a programmed course bears responsibility for interesting and efficient materials which lead to success while producing results. If the materials are intrinsically interesting and so ordered as to ensure student success, most students will very likely finish the course.

The availability of fully programmed S-I materials varies greatly by language, level, and skill. ERIC Focus Report No. 7 ("Foreign Language Programmed Materials: 1969"), obtainable for 25 cents from MLA/ACTFL Materials Center, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011, lists currently available materials. Even those that may be considered outdated contain usable portions. Materials for the first and second levels of instruction within the sequence of grades 9-12 are thus at hand for immediate use in some languages. Since in more advanced courses it appears altogether possible to conduct self-instruction with materials which do not have a stringent ordering of elements, it is considered that a present scarcity of specifically programmed self-instructional materials for advanced levels need not deter the use of such programmed materials which are available for early and intermediate levels of instruction in the secondary schools.

It is worth emphasizing that the programmed self-instructional course is a teaching system, and that whenever it is interfered with, to that extent it is weakened or destroyed. To be sure, the teacher may need to give occasional explanations to a student who does not get sufficient information from the program. The teacher should indeed have final control over the use of the program and should consider that her role as manager and diagnostician both allows and requires her to prescribe adequate remedies for identified shortcomings.

Perhaps the best kinds of S-I programs are modular in design, those in which the teacher is not forced to accept the whole package but may select portions according to general or individual goals and needs. This is where individualized instruction—made possible by self-instructional procedures of a "programmed" nature—can be used to break the lockstep of instruction and learning.

Admittedly, the foreign language teachers cannot go too fast or too far now, nor can they expect the publication of more nearly ideal materials in any quantity before 1974. However, once the context of instruction has been changed and a better environment created, there will be a natural demand for S-I materials. These materials will come if the teachers require them, for publishers are not reticent in providing for a sure market.

By virtue of the size and nature of its educational system, New York State is in a position to create a market rather than respond to whatever is available. If the Department were to publicize its intention to establish programs in specific foreign languages, having a strong introductory emphasis on the receptive skills, continuing to the transmissive skills (though with more ultimate stress on speaking than writing), and utilizing a major S-I component at the beginning and intermediate levels if not beyond, fully programmed S-I materials would most likely become available in good quantity, quality, and variety within four or five years.

Meantime, it is possible to alter or convert existing materials to provide marked initial stress on listening-comprehension and to create intermediate S-I courses by writing supplementary exercises for presently available materials. For example, dialogues in common A-L texts can easily be used for early training in listening-comprehension. Radio plays of a more advanced nature can be used for the same purpose at later stages. The point is that teachers should know that they do not have to wait for Utopia. They can DO SOMETHING NOW.

Equipment

Little new equipment is immediately needed for S-I. Any good language laboratory containing full record-and-playback positions is adequate, provided one has appropriate materials. Simple tape-recorders with headphones and amplification for individual use can suffice. One may make inexpensive improvements such as the addition of a foot-control to operate the tape-recorder, thus freeing the students' hands for writing and related learning activities. In any case, respectable minima can be achieved with existing equipment. In particular, much more can be achieved than heretofore.

An outstanding problem in language laboratory learning is self-pacing, little of which goes on with the present use of magnetic tapes. Improved equipment might better regulate and assure self-pacing and accordingly contribute to the individualization of instruction. However, one should beware of huge technological investments which may end up governing instructional

activities, sometimes inappropriately. It is also advisable to avoid big investments in materials, for they, too, can result in a long-lasting reduction of options and a loss of flexibility.

One solution is to restrict the purchase of newly developed electro-mechanical devices to the replacement of standard items on a minimum basis till they have a proven history of performance and maintenance-requirements. Similarly, one may seek to develop local interim materials through adaptation with minimum investment. The schools may thus become financially free to adopt the next generation of equipment and materials which will presumably be most appropriate to S-I.

In the selection and use of equipment, it is of overriding importance to make certain that each student has complete and constant control of his program materials. Otherwise, self-pacing—one of the most prominent and promising features of S-I—becomes impossible and a new lock-step is formed. Another requirement of effective equipment is that it ensure the interaction of the student and his materials. In the development of oral skill, a machine which starts and stops automatically in response to the student's vocal impulse does much to fulfill this requirement. One must not rely on the student to stop the machine manually and take a piece of the action—he may not stop it.

Among the promising machines useful to S-I is the Audio-Frame-System (AFS 2001) by New Century (440 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y.), which is moderate in cost, is guaranteed for one year, and requires an oral response from the student for continuous operation. Its weakness is that it cannot evaluate the response. In any case, New Century is a company to watch, both in the development of equipment and in the publication of materials.

One of the most sophisticated instrumentations being developed and adapted to self-instruction in foreign languages is that utilized in Computer Assisted Instruction ("CAI"). At present, sophisticated CAI systems are too costly to permit purchase by any single school district. However, it is expected that within the next three to four years the simultaneous sharing from remote sites of a fourth-generation PLATO system, for example, by four to five thousand users will reduce the total instructional cost to about fifty cents per pupil per hour, thus providing a powerful aid to teachers and students on all levels and at locations of varying distance. With central computer facilities located in any large city such as Albany, student consoles leased or purchased in quantities ranging from a single terminal to several hundred could be tied in to CAI systems from any point in New York State (or beyond).

In experimental foreign language courses at SUNY Stony Brook, at Stanford University, and at the University of Illinois, this relatively new instructional tool has been utilized since 1967 with varying degrees of acceptance by faculty and students. It may be that CAI has so far tended to give primary stress to development of reading-writing skills and that much remains to be done in adding audio-lingual components to the present excellent visual component. In any case, these courses (largely of a programmed nature) have demonstrated the feasibility and ever-increasing effectiveness of CAI as a help

to the teacher in his new role as a manager of instruction. At the same time, this new medium has generally succeeded in arousing and maintaining interest in foreign language study.

We cannot be sure what advances in language learning may be made possible by technological developments in the 1970's. However, it is logical to expect that the intensive study of language and speech in the last decade, plus the experiments conducted with teaching machines and machines for speech-analysis, will together find application in improved instruction for our time.

The main question one must ask oneself in choosing materials, techniques, and equipment is: which of the teaching agents can exercise the best control (i.e., the most productive educational guidance in terms of agreed-upon goals) over student behavior? There are strong indications that S-I materials best perform this function, and that their use can guide the selection of techniques and equipment.

Recapitulation

Foreign language study in the 1970's should be characterized by a new context of learning in which the teacher would be a manager of instruction.

Improved techniques of instruction would allot a greater initial rôle to the receptive over the transmissive skills, would place greater initial stress on the development of skill in auditory comprehension, would carefully cultivate effective study habits in each student, would give precedence to "transfer" activities over "drill" activities, and would prescribe pattern practice according to individual needs. Reoriented instruction would focus attention on word-groups rather than individual words, and would capitalize on those sense-modalities and learning-preferences which can best achieve a desired goal.

Flexible curricula should permit individual students to develop the foreign language skills of greatest interest and aptitude.

Programmed self-instruction shows the greatest promise for the 1970's in fostering the rôle of the teacher as "manager", providing student-centered instruction, ministering to a wide spectrum of student-abilities, and contributing to the individualization of instruction. It is likely that the predominant form of S-I in the '70's will be "partial" rather than "total", and it appears that the best kind of S-I program will prove to be "modular" in nature.

Admittedly, many S-I problems remain, and wholly suitable materials are in short supply at present. It is nevertheless possible and desirable for prescient teachers and school-systems to prepare for this instructional mode and to embark on a program of adaptation and adoption NOW. As for materials, they will come if the publishers are sure of the demand.

Simple tape-recorders with headphones and amplification for individual use can meet immediate equipment needs for S-I. Future flexibility of options can and should be retained by making conservative purchases of current S-I materials and associated equipment. Plans and purchases relating to S-I equipment should be based on the necessity of ensuring complete control of program materials by each student and interaction of the student with his materials. The most sophisticated technological development which has applicability to language learning as discussed here is represented by CAI, especially with its addition of components for audio-lingual training. However, any adoption of CAI in the near future implies regional—perhaps State—planning and participation on a broad scale.

The Department View

The Bureau of Foreign Languages Education generally associates itself with the views of the panelists. Some of the recommendations (e.g., the teacher as "manager" of instruction, and desirable modifications of prevalent audio-lingual practices) can receive immediate local consideration. Others (team teaching, teacher aides, modular scheduling, and flexibility of classroom organization and components) have already been considered by many schools. Still others (the degree of relative stress on skill development, and the flexibility of curricula according to student aptitudes and desires) should be the subject of prolonged discussions among teachers on the one hand, and between the major groups of foreign language teachers in the State and the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education on the other hand.

This office has long stressed the desirability of widespread use of prognostic tests, along with other criteria, to guide students in foreign language study. Evidence of the Bureau's interest in programmed self-instruction is found in the letter of June 9, 1965, subject: "Programmed Instruction in Foreign Languages", and addressed to all administrators, teachers of modern foreign languages, and guidance counselors in New York State. Although containing statements which are still useful, that letter would now have to be amended in the light of subsequent advances.

An outstanding concern which should be shared by all is that expressed by Robert Pulliam: "Will teachers leave it to engineers to decide how machines will be used to teach languages, or will they themselves decide, as participants?"[7] There is no doubt that an effective technology for teaching languages is gradually being created. It is quite likely that this technology will make marked progress in the 1970's, and that specially devised materials will accompany specially devised equipment. For example, the establishment of CAI systems in the major cities of the State, with terminals serving many regions, is not inconceivable. The versatility of CAI—its suitability to programs of a multi-disciplinary nature—may well hasten and broaden its adoption. However, the speed and extent of this adoption can be only a matter of conjecture.

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[7]"The Mechanical Recognition of Speech: Prospects For Use In The Teaching of Languages", ERIC Bulletin No. 18 (November, 1970), Special Report No. 5, p. 4.

Of course, this Bureau is very eager to have New York State teachers of foreign languages (both ancient and modern) participate in the application of effective technology to instruction. This eagerness was in fact responsible for the subject panel discussion although tardiness in allocation of funds delayed the conference by several years. In some respects, the delay may have brought as much gain as loss, for it is possible to speak more positively and hopefully now than it might have been earlier.

Caution will continue to be advisable in adopting the new technology. In particular, teachers must become thoroughly knowledgeable in the requirements of effective programmed materials and associated equipment, always according more importance to materials than equipment, and always adhering to the programmer's directions for proper use of the materials. Certainly, the Regents program means to ensure that none of its adherents in the classroom are bilked of their just educational due as a result of well-intentioned activities which turn out to be unproductive and whose unproductiveness should have been foreseen by all concerned.

A reasonable strategy might be the following: in addition to continuing their normal professional readings to keep abreast of the times and to maintain personal development, all foreign language teachers should ask their school to procure and should read upon publication the successive volumes of the Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education; without delay, teachers of French could examine a copy of Basic French, by Theodore H. Mueller and Henri Niedzelski, and teachers of German could examine a copy of Basic German, by Ferdinand A. Ruplin and John R. Russell, both published by New Century in New York City; teachers of other languages could examine copies of corresponding materials listed in ERIC Focus Report No. 7, cited on page 8 of this document; all teachers would gain from reading "The Development and Field Testing of a Self-Instructional French Program"[8]; bearing in mind that it represents "total" S-I, French teachers should examine a copy of CAL Introductory French: A Programmed Course, by Catherine J. Garvey, Patricia A. Johansen, and James S. Noblitt, to be published by New Century in 1971; all interested and able teachers could start preparing themselves to utilize programmed self-instructional materials in becoming "managers of instruction"; interested, able, and experienced teachers who are entrusted with beginning language classes could make plans to use programmed self-instructional materials with one of their classes and keep careful records of their experiences and results, with a view to helping the Bureau determine whether to offer further encouragement in this direction; some of these teachers who are familiar with the techniques of controlled experimentation could conduct full-fledged experiments with the use of the subject materials; finally, as many teachers as possible from the entire State should attend the 24th University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, which will be held at the University of Kentucky in Lexington from April 22 to 24, 1971, with Saturday, April 24, devoted entirely to Individualization of Instruction in foreign languages. Of course, these activities of an enquiring nature should be part of an ongoing informational program.

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[8]Patricia A. Johansen in The Linguistic Reporter, Vol. 11, No. 6 (December, 1969), Supplement 24 (December, 1969), pp. 13-27.

Teachers undertaking an S-I project should bear in mind the needs of their students for the second level of instruction. (It is felt that materials for later levels of instruction are easier to find and to coordinate on any basis, self-instructional or not.) Teachers who are enthusiastic but inexperienced and without special training, and those whose schools are unable to provide optimum conditions for success, are advised to delay actual use of programmed self-instructional materials.[9] All should be aware of the risks, difficulties, and demands upon time possibly associated with the proposal being made here. Of course, all interested persons and school districts should make necessary use of the Division of Research and take all possible advantage of the pertinent Titles of ESEA and NDEA.

However, let no one think that one of the real obstructions to sound and well-reasoned experimentation in foreign language instruction is the Regents program of study or examinations. There seems to be insufficient awareness of the great flexibility which is possible in all Regents programs of instruction in New York State. Inflexibility of instructional attitudes and procedures is to be sought elsewhere. The only inflexibility in the instructional branch of the New York State Education Department is an abiding concern for the quality of education received by the children of New York State.

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[9]The dilemma of experienced versus inexperienced teachers can be provisionally viewed as follows: experienced teachers may be those most likely to interfere with the program, but also those most likely to understand all the pedagogical implications of the program; inexperienced teachers may be those most willing to let the program assume all its predetermined tasks of instruction, but also those least able to understand from the start all the detailed implications of the program. Central to the task of instruction is the ability to determine accurately the amount and quality of learning which has taken place between two points in time. Although programmed self-instructional materials are designed to provide the solutions to foreseeable problems, even the best programs do not normally have a periodic evaluative device which is summary in nature. In human terms, evaluative skill can be developed through general experience and applied to new situations, or it can be developed through special training with specific reference to new techniques. Given the present state of the art, the dilemma is here resolved by equating the experience of teachers of proven competence in the classroom with the special training of inexperienced teachers who show good promise even though they may not have yet had the opportunity to give full proof of competence in the classroom. However, it is considered that the inexperienced teacher without special training is at a considerable disadvantage in undertaking the use of S-I materials. When it becomes certain that inexperienced teachers are generally as successful as experienced teachers—excluding special training in all cases—in managing the use of programmed self-instructional materials, this Bureau will be happy to revise its provisional view.

Probably ever since the institution of the Regents program of instruction and examinations over a century ago, it has been possible for any school system to propose a locally developed course in lieu of a specific Regents course to yield Regents credit under normal safeguards. At present, the procedure is as follows: the principal of a school which for cogent reasons wishes to offer for Regents credit a special locally prepared course of study instead of a given Regents course of study procures from the Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development four copies of a form entitled "Application For Approval Of Courses For State Diploma Credit", accomplishes the form with the help of the foreign language department chairman or teacher affected, and sends three copies to the Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development, retaining the fourth copy for his own files. Accompanying the application, which is made out according to printed directions on both sides of the form, are two copies of the proposed course of study in detail, plus a description of the materials, equipment, and techniques to be used. Although the Bureau of Secondary Curriculum Development bears responsibility for processing the application, it sends the proposal for review to the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education, which normally requires that the school also provide a copy of the final examination for review several months before administration thereof.

As in the case of the two previous panel reports, the teachers of the State are cordially invited to make their views known by writing individually or as members of professional groups to the Chief of the Bureau of Foreign Languages Education. In examining the proposals made by the successive panels regarding the nature of foreign language instruction in New York State for the 1970's, no ingrained custom, no established practice should remain unassailed if it can be proven to stand in the way of undoubted progress. At the same time, alert, conscientious, well-informed teachers should beware of fads, the many forms of charlatanism, and the weathervane approach to learning which threatens much of education in America today.

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Approved:

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